

# URGENT ACTION

## ARMED ATTACK AGAINST MEMBERS OF COPINH

**On 30 June unknown assailants attacked Berta Zuniga Cáceres, Sotero Chavarría Fúnez and José Asunción Martínez, coordinators of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), while they were on the road returning to La Esperanza municipality. The safety of COPINH members remains at risk.**

On 30 June, **Berta Zuniga Cáceres**, the General Coordinator of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras, **COPINH**), and national COPINH coordinators **Sotero Chavarría Fúnez** and **José Asunción Martínez**, were returning to La Esperanza from Cancire Community in Santiago Puringla municipality. They had been discussing strategies with the Indigenous Council for defending territory and the environment in Cancire. COPINH members told Amnesty International that around 2:36pm, while on a rural road, a vehicle overtook theirs at high speed. A few metres ahead, the same vehicle stopped in the middle of the road. Three individuals with machetes and the driver stepped out of the vehicle and stood next to it in a threatening manner trying to hit the defenders' vehicle with the machetes. COPINH's driver was able to avoid them, but one of the armed men threw a stone at their vehicle that hit the windshield. A few minutes later the same vehicle overtook COPINH's car, but with only the driver inside. The driver then tried to force COPINH's vehicle off the road. The attacker's car remained in front of COPINH's car at a slower speed. The COPINH members succeeded in losing their attacker once they reached an urban area.

Sotero Chavarría Fúnez informed Amnesty International that in previous days two unknown men were asking for his whereabouts in his hometown. In June, unknown men tried to kidnap the mother of his children in a vehicle. On 21 June, COPINH reports that an unknown man threatened **Francisco Javier Sánchez** another coordinator, with a pistol while he was working the land and said he would kill his children.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Calling on the authorities to take all appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of COPINH members and Berta Cáceres' relatives in accordance with their wishes in order to fulfil their obligation to protect them as set by the precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- Calling on them to initiate a prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into the attacks and aggressions reported by COPINH members;
- Urging them to publicly recognize the legitimate and rightful human rights work done by COPINH.

**Contact these two officials by 16 August, 2017:**

Minister of Security  
 General de División Julián Pacheco Tinoco  
 Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de Seguridad, Aldea el Ocotal  
 Antiguo Local de la Academia Nacional de Policía ANAPO  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
 Email: [comunicacionCND5@gmail.com](mailto:comunicacionCND5@gmail.com) or  
[sprudott@yahoo.com](mailto:sprudott@yahoo.com)  
**Salutation: Dear Ministry of Security/ Estimado Secretario de Seguridad**

Ambassador Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes  
 Embassy of Honduras  
 3007 Tilden St. NW Suite 4M  
 Washington DC 20008  
 T: 202 966 7702 OR 202 966 2604  
 F: 202 966 9751  
 Contact Form: <http://www.hondurasemb.org/site/index.php/2015-08-31-08-04-49>  
**Salutation: Dear Ambassador/ Estimado Embajador**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 60.17*

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**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Members of COPINH and Berta Cáceres' relatives, including her daughter Berta Zuniga Cáceres, have been targeted with harassment and attacks since Berta Cáceres, leader and cofounder of COPINH, was shot dead on 2 March 2016 in her home in the town of La Esperanza, in the province of Intibucá, west Honduras.

On 8 March 2016 in San Francisco de Lempira, southwest Honduras, four armed men in plain clothes driving two vehicles without plates parked by a community radio station's premises and took pictures of the people getting in and out. One of the armed men threatened a radio worker at gun point, then grabbed his phone and deleted the pictures he took to record the incident. The same week, community members saw other men driving cars without plates surrounding Aureliano Molina's house and trying unsuccessfully to break into his home. On 11 March in La Esperanza, COPINH members reported seeing unidentified men monitoring the organization's Casa de Sanación y Justicia (a shelter for women) and the Utopia Centre (a community centre). A car stood in front of the entrance of Utopia Centre late at night for several minutes. That same day, police officers took pictures of participants in a public demonstration demanding justice for Berta Cáceres in several cities of Honduras. An armed man in plain clothes followed one of Berta Cáceres' daughters in a mall in Tegucigalpa, the capital, during the same week.

On 13 July 2016, the offices of Honduran organization Broad Movement for Justice and Dignity (Movimiento Amplio por la Dignidad y la Justicia, MADJ) were burglarized. The burglar stole computers with sensitive information on high-profile cases they represent, including the assassination of human rights defender Berta Cáceres (for more information, see: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr37/4453/2016/en/>).

On 31 January 2017, international organization Global Witness launched a new report about the situation of land, territory and environmental defenders in Honduras. The weekend before, a poster began to circulate on social media, accusing members of Honduran organizations the Independent Lenca Indigenous Movement of La Paz (Movimiento Indígena Lenca Independiente de La Paz, MILPAH), the Honduran Centre for the Promotion of Community Development (Centro Hondureño de Promoción para el Desarrollo Comunitario, CEHPRODEC) and COPINH, as well Global Witness, of discrediting the country, being allied with radical groups and of funding smear campaigns against Honduras (for more information, see: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr37/5613/2017/en/>).

COPINH has been fighting for Lenca Indigenous peoples' rights for over 20 years. COPINH members have been campaigning for their right to free, prior and informed consent in relation to a proposal for a hydroelectric plant that might force them out of their ancestral lands since 2011. Its members continue to be targeted with threats and harassment in connection with their work. Despite having been the subject of threats and harassment for years in connection to her human rights work—for which she was granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights—the investigation into Berta Cáceres' death so far has achieved minimum progress. Amnesty International has called on the authorities to ensure that the evidence is made available so that the parties involved in the case can exercise their rights and so that a thorough and impartial investigation into the killing can take place (see *Justice still in jeopardy in Berta Cáceres murder case*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr37/6335/2017/en/>).

Name: Berta Zuniga Cáceres (f), Sotero Chavarría Fúnez (m), José Asunción Martínez (m), Francisco Javier Sánchez (m) and other members of the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras, COPINH)  
Gender m/f: all